

SAFETY INFORMATION





Safety Information

FIRE SAFETY



Q. What can I do to reduce the risk of fire?

A.

Install and Maintain Smoke Detectors

Install a smoke detector outside of every sleeping area.

Install a smoke detector on every level of your home. Test your smoke detector monthly.

Change the battery in your smoke detector twice a year when you change the time on your clocks.

Draw an Escape Plan of Your House

Include all doors and windows.

Have a primary and a sec-

ondary escape route from every area.

Select a safe meeting place outside your home and show it on your plan.

Practice the Plan with Your Family

Physically walk through your plan.

Practice your plan at least twice a year.

Alternate between day and night, primary and secondary escape routes.

Q. I don't have a smoke detector in my home. What should I do?

A. Battery-operated smoke detectors are given away in the District of Columbia free of charge. Residents can receive one smoke detector per household. Smoke detectors may be requested from the Fire Prevention Division, Lobby Level, 441 4th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001 - (202) 727-1600.

To get a smoke detector, you must live in DC and be a homeowner currently living in your home. Proof of residency required.



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Q. Who should I talk to or where should I go to ensure that my home is fire safe?

A. Home fire safety inspections are available by appointment. These home inspections are conducted as a free courtesy of the DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) Department's Firefighting Division. They will look for overloaded outlets, working smoke detectors, unobstructed exit routes from your home, and good visibility from the street. A copy of the inspection findings will be given to the resident along with suggestions. A follow-up appointment may also be requested. Call (202) 673-3331 for an appointment.



Q. If I am concerned about the fire safety of my commercial building, what can I do?

A. If you are concerned about the fire safety of your commercial building, you can contact DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) to conduct a fire prevention inspection. Inspections of commercial buildings for code violations are available by appointment. These inspections are conducted by the Fire Inspection Division, and charge a fee. A copy of the inspection findings will be provided. A follow-up appointment may also be requested. Call (202) 727-1600 for an appointment.



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Q. What do I do if I smell smoke, see fire, or hear my smoke detector?

A.

Get Out and Stay Out

- Follow your escape plan.
- Get low—crawl to avoid the dangers of heat and smoke.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door is hot, do not open. Use your alternate exit, such as a window.
- Never use elevators. Use the stairs.
- Once out—stay out.

Go to Your Safe Meeting Place

- Gather at your designated meeting place.
- Ensure your entire family is accounted for.
- Notify the first arriving fire company that all members have been accounted for; if not, tell them how many persons are missing, their approximate ages, and location last seen.

Call for Help

- When your family is gathered at your meeting place, send one person to a neighbor's house to call the Fire Department.
- Call 911, stay calm, give the operator your address, and relay the nature of the call.
- Stay on the phone until the operator tells you to disconnect the call.





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FIRST AID TIPS

Q. If someone has swallowed poison, what should I do?

A. Symptoms of swallowing poison can vary greatly. Below are some aids to determine whether a poison was swallowed:

Information from victim or observer

Presence of poison container

Condition of victim (sudden onset of pain or illness)

Burns around lips

Breath odor

Eye pupil contracted to pinpoint size

Call 911 immediately. Save the label or container for identification. For **CONSCIOUS VICTIMS**, drink milk or water to dilute the poison, but avoid oil. For **UNCONSCIOUS VICTIMS**, maintain open airway (victim on side); give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or CPR if necessary; do not give fluids; do not induce vomiting. For **CONVULSIONS**, do not restrain victim; loosen tight clothing; watch for airway obstruction; do not give fluids; do not induce vomiting.

Q. What should I do if someone goes into shock?

A. Signs and symptoms of shock include:

Pale skin (or bluish), cold to touch (possibly moist)

Victim is weak

Rapid pulse (over 100)

Rate of breathing usually increases; may be shallow or deep and irregular

Call 911 immediately. Keep the victim lying down. Cover him/her only enough to keep him/her from losing body heat

Q. What should I do if someone suffer from a fracture or dislocation?

A. Sign and symptoms include:

Pain and tenderness

May have difficulty moving injured body part

Obvious deformities - swelling and discoloration of skin

Call 911 immediately. Keep broken bone and adjacent joints from moving, and give care for shock.



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Q. What should I do if someone has a heart attack?

A. Sign and symptoms include:

Acute pain in chest, upper abdomen, or lower arms

Extreme shortness of breath

Call 911. Place victim in a comfortable position, usually sitting up. If not breathing, give rescue breathing. DO NOT give liquids to unconscious victims.

Q. What do I do if someone loss consciousness

A. Sign and symptoms include: Unresponsiveness

Call 911. Keep victim warm and lying down, head turned to the side. If breathing stops, give rescue breathing. Never give an unconscious person food or liquids.

LEAD

Q. What are the health effects of lead?

A. Lead can pose a significant risk to health if too much of it enters your body. Even small amounts of lead can be harmful if swallowed or inhaled. If lead accumulates in the body over many years, it can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells, and kidneys.



Lead from chipping and flaking paint, if ingested, can cause significant health impacts especially for small children.

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of person's total exposure to lead.



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Q. What should I do if I think my home has high levels of lead?

A.

- Get your young children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy. Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Make sure children eat healthy, low-fat foods.
- Get your home checked for lead hazards.
- Regularly clean floors, windowsills, and other surfaces.
- Wipe soil off shoes before entering the house.
- Talk to your landlord about fixing surfaces with peeling or chipping paint.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating (call 1-800-424-LEAD for guidelines).
- Do not use a belt-sander, propane torch, heat gun, dry scraper, or dry sandpaper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.
- Do not try to remove lead-based paint yourself.



Q. What should I do if I am concerned about lead in my drinking water?

A.

- Draw water for drinking or cooking after other high water use activities, such as bathing, showering, flushing the toilet, or washing your clothes, so that a total of at least 10 minutes of flushing water from your lead service pipes has occurred.
- Flush your kitchen tap for 60 seconds, then collect drinking water in containers and store them in the refrigerator. About once a month, remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your faucet to remove debris.
- Use cold water for drinking or cooking, as hot water will contain higher levels of lead. Cold water should be heated for making hot beverages or cooking. Do not use the water from the hot water faucet for drinking or cooking.



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Q. Are there lead screening measures available?

- A. The level of lead in your child's blood can be measured and early detection means early intervention. Measures include:
- A blood test can reveal if there's an elevated level of lead in your child's blood.
 - A second blood test is usually done if a child's screening shows that lead may be present. X-rays and other tests may be necessary.
 - Follow-up questions will be asked to learn about the child's behavior, health, and symptoms; anything the child has chewed on or swallowed; possible sources of lead; the child's diet; and/or family medical history.
 - Other measures may include home inspection for lead sources, or counseling about how to protect children

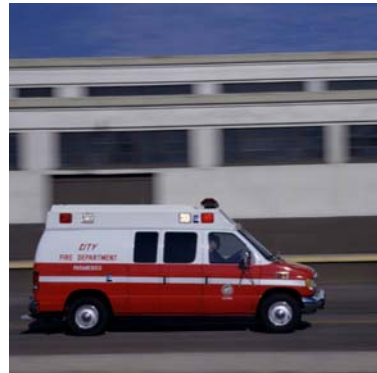
For more information, please call
Department of Health at (202)
535-2626

EMERGENCY PREPARENESS

Q. How does the terrorist threat advisory system work?

A. The DC Emergency Management Agency (DCEMA) has a Homeland Security Terrorist Threat Conditions System that mirrors the national Homeland Security Threat system. Like the national system, the DC advisory system color-codes threat levels for easy understanding. Unique in the District system are suggested precautions (guidelines) for DC residents and businesses to take for each threat level. These suggested precautions provide general guidance only. They can help organizations and families take actions best tailored for their needs.

The District's threat level may be influenced by the decisions of federal officials about the national program. It may also be adjusted by District officials in instances when threats specific to the District warrant a change. Residents, government, and others will be notified of threat level changes via multiple communication pathways, such as television, radio, newspaper, email, and fax.





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The color-coded warning level below are the different levels to prepare for or respond to an emergency.



Q. How does D.C. notify residents in case there is an emergency?

A. There are three systems in place to notify DC residents in case of an emergency.

1. [DC Emergency Text Alert](#) powered by roam secure.
The text notification system allows citizens to receive emergency text messages on any text capable device—cell phone, computer email, pagers, and fax. Citizens enroll online, identify the type of device, and the access number.
2. [DC Emergency Voice Alert](#)
A telephone voice messaging system that allows emergency managers to notify citizens of an actual or impending incident that requires them to take some protective action (e.g. evacuate, shelter-in-place). The system allows emergency managers to select very precise geographic areas and call the phones in that area to deliver emergency instructions. Citizens are automatically enrolled and are not required to sign up for this service.
3. [Emergency Alert System \(EAS\)](#)
The District installed and tested new equipment at several area radio stations as part of its management of the Emergency Alert System, the partnership with local media in which emergency messages are broadcast over local media outlets.

Q. What radio stations should I listen to for important emergency alerts?

A. The primary radio stations (FM/AM) to listen to in the District of Columbia include the following:

[WTOP 1500 AM, 820 AM, 107.7 FM](#)
[WMAL 630 AM](#)
[WKYS 93.9 FM](#)
[WHFS 99.1 FM](#)

[WJZW 105.9 FM](#)
[WGMS 103.5 FM](#)
[WPGC 95.5 FM](#)



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Q. How does DC help its residents prepare for an emergency?

A.

The District helps residents prepare for an emergency in the following ways:

Ward Days—These community events provide citizens with the opportunity to take part in two training courses, “Basic Emergency Management for the District of Columbia” and “Terrorism: A Citizen’s Awareness”.

These courses are designed to help prepare residents to respond and recover from emergencies and disasters, teach them how to develop a family preparedness plan, and inform them about the [District Response Plan](#)



Training—Citizens and District emergency response personnel can take emergency preparedness training courses in a broad range of disciplines, including:

1. Personal safety and protection
2. Community emergency response teams
3. Emergency response to terrorism
4. Bioterrorism
5. Hazardous materials
6. Debris management
7. Shelter operations
8. Earthquakes, flood and inclement weather

Services to residents

Operation of cooling centers during heat advisory days.

Operation of community-based emergency shelters.

Operation of community emergency service sites where residents can request public safety assistance.

For information on Ward Days or training courses open to residents, call DCEMA at (202) 727-6161.



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Q. What actions can I take to protect and prepare my family for an emergency?

A. The two most common forms of emergency protective actions are shelter-in-place and evacuation. During and after an event, stay tuned to your local emergency station or listen to an emergency personnel to know which protective action you should use.

Shelter-In-Place—Shelter-in-place involves simply staying in your house or inside any other location you might be, to avoid harm. In the event of an emergency such as the release of a hazardous material, it is not always recommended to immediately evacuate, as leaving your house might expose you to harmful agents that have been dispersed into the air.

Evacuation—The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has placed numerous road signs throughout the city that mark the 14 primary out-bound evacuation or event routes.

There are also in-bound routes for emergency vehicles. These routes are clearly marked with signage directing motorists either to I-495 or to the National Mall. During an emergency,

stay tuned to your local emergency station or listen to emergency personnel for instructions on which route to follow. Also see a map at the following link:

<http://dcema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view.asp?a=1226&q=533298>



Before an emergency

Q. Why do I need to get prepared?

A. An emergency can strike without warning. That is why getting prepared can save precious time and lives. If any member of your household has a disability or is elderly, find out what services may be available to aid in their care or evacuation in the event of an emergency.



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Q. What should I include in an emergency go kit?

A. You should consider including the following items:

- At least a 3-day supply of water (1 gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Replace every 6 months.
- A 3- to 5-day supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
- A change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes.
- Blankets, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- A first aid kit and prescription medications (be sure to check the expiration dates).
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution (be sure to check the expiration dates).
- A list of family physicians, important medical information, and the style and serial number of medical devices such as pace-makers.
- Special items for infants, the elderly, or family members with disabilities.
- A battery-powered radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
- Identification, credit cards, cash, and photocopies of important family documents including home insurance information.
- An extra set of car and house keys

Q. What should I stock for emergency food supplies?

A. It is possible for a healthy person to survive on half of their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. It is also important to keep in mind that you do not have to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. Here are some helpful tips:

- Use canned foods, dry mixes and other staples you use every day.
- Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation, or cooking are best.
- Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils in your emergency food supply.
- Individuals with special diets and allergies will need to be considered as well as toddlers and the elderly.
- Do not forget nonperishable foods for your pets.



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Q. What can I do to make sure that my business is prepared for an emergency?

A. Basic steps that a business should take to prepare for an emergency include:

- Prepare backups and store offsite all computer records (i.e. payroll, inventory records).
- Have an evacuation plan in place to evacuate staff and customers and test this plan regularly.
- Maintain sufficient insurance coverage for your business
- Identify critical business functions that absolutely must continue (i.e. shipping, inventory control, payroll) and come up with processes to ensure these will carry on.

Q. What should I do to prepare for my pet?

- A.** In the event of an evacuation, you must take your pet with you.
- Make arrangements for pets in advance of an emergency.
 - Get an identification collar and rabies tag.
 - Use a carrier or cage and leash.
 - Prepare any medications (be sure to check expiration dates).
 - Have newspapers and plastic trash bags for handling waste.
 - Have at least two-weeks supply of food, water, and food bowls.
 - Veterinary records (most animal shelters do not allow pets without proof of vaccination).

Q. Why and how should I work with my neighbors?

A. Working with neighbors in an emergency can save lives and property. Meet with your community members to plan how you could work together until help arrives. If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a home association or crime watch group, participate in emergency preparedness activities and planning for your community.

During and after an emergency

During and after an emergency, it is important to *stay calm*. Even after an event, there may still be many dangers. What seems like a safe distance or location may not be. Stay tuned to your local emergency station and follow the advice of trained professionals. Unless told to evacuate, avoid roads to allow emergency vehicles access. What you do next can save your life and the lives of others.



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Q. What do I do if the power goes off?

A.

- Remain calm, and assist family members or neighbors who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
- Locate a flashlight with batteries to use until power comes back on. Do not use candles—this can cause a fire.
- Turn off sensitive electric equipment such as computers, VCRs, and televisions.
- Turn off major electric appliances that were on when the power went off. This will help to prevent power surges when electricity is restored.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep cold in and heat out.
- Do not use the stove to heat your home—this can cause a fire or fatal gas leak.
- Use extreme caution when driving. If traffic signals are out, treat each signal as a stop sign—come to a complete stop at every intersection and look before you proceed.

Do not call **911** to ask about the power outage. Listen to the news radio stations for updates.

Q. What do I do in case of natural hazards emergencies?

A. The District is vulnerable to a variety of types of severe weather including thunderstorms, hurricanes, flash floods, snow storms, and tornadoes. It is important for you to understand the difference between a watch and a warning for severe weather. A severe storm watch means that severe weather may develop. A severe weather warning means a storm has developed and is on its way—take cover immediately!

The safest place to ride out any storm is inside of a secure building or well-built home. Even in a well-built housing, you should:

- Listen to weather updates and stay informed.
- Be ready to evacuate if necessary.
- Keep away from windows and doors.
- Have your Emergency Go Kit handy.



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Q. What do I do if water supplies are contaminated?

A If you think your water may be contaminated, you should purify it before using it. This includes water used for drinking, cooking, cleaning dishes, or bathing. The best way to purify water is to boil it.

Boiling is considered the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a boil for 3-5 minutes, and then allow it to cool before drinking. Pouring water back and forth between two containers will improve the taste by putting oxygen back into the water.

Q. What do I do to cope with emotional and psychological effects after experiencing an emergency?

A. It may be helpful to:

- Talk with your family and friends about what happened and how you feel about it, and try to evaluate and plan for the chance it could happen again.
- Volunteer at a local shelter, blood bank, or food pantry to assist emergency victims.
- Spend time doing things other than watching or listening to news of the disaster.
- Consult your minister or spiritual advisor.
- In particular, children may need reassurance and extra attention. It is best to encourage them to share their feelings, even if you must listen to their stories repeatedly—this is a common way for children to grasp what they've experienced. You may also want to share your feelings about the event with them.

Crisis, grief, and stress counseling is available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** for you or a family member suffering persistent emotional or psychological problems related to an emergency. To access counseling services call the Department of Mental Health Access HelpLine at (888) 793-4357.

REPORTING A CRIME

Q. How do I report a crime?

A. In case of emergency, dial 911 immediately. For non-emergency situations, dial 311. If you do not speak English, you can request an interpreter speaking your native language. If you can name your native language in English, it will help the operator operate your call more promptly.



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Q. Where can one get a copy of the crime report?

A. You must have the CCN number (a six-digit number given at the time the report is taken) and then you may contact Policy Headquarters at 202-727-4357. There is a \$2 fee for crime reports.

Q. How do I make a complaint if I am not satisfied with how the police handled my case?

A. You will need to contact the Office of Citizen Complaint Review at 202-727-3838. You should also voice your concerns at regular Police Service Area (PSA) meetings, contact your local district for the PSA meeting schedules and venue.

CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Q. What is Crime Victim Compensation Program (CVCP)?

A.. The Crime Victims Compensation Program assists innocent victims of violent crime and their families with crime-related expenses such as funeral and burial costs, medical and mental health costs, lost wages, loss of support and services, clean up of a crime scene and, for victims of domestic violence, the cost of temporary shelter. Through the services of a victim advocate, crime victims receive assistance in filing applications; locating victim service programs, support groups, or mental health counselors; and handling quality of life issues that arise after victimization. Contact information:

*Court Building A
515 5th Street, N.W., Room 104
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 879-4216*

Q. Who are eligible to apply for Crime Victim Compensation Program and what types of expenses are covered?

A1. Eligibility

- A claim for compensation must be filed within 1 year after the crime or 1 year after learning of the CVAP.
- The victim must have been injured in the District of Columbia or as a result of a terrorist act committed outside of the U.S.
- Except in sexual assault and domestic violence cases, a police report must have been filed within 7 days of crime.
- The claimant cannot have participated in, consented to or provoked the crime.



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Victim's expenses are eligible for compensation.
Persons injured while attempting to assist a crime victim.

A2. Types of Expenses Covered

- ✦ Crime-related medical and mental-health counseling bills
- ✦ Funeral and burial costs
- ✦ Wages, support, or services lost as a direct result of the crime
- ✦ The cost of cleaning a crime scene
- ✦ The replacement cost of clothing held as evidence
- ✦ Costs of temporary emergency food and housing not exceeding 120 days
- ✦ Costs of replacing doors, windows, locks or other items to secure the victim's home or other place of residence
- ✦ Cost of car rental while victim's or secondary victim's car is in police possession
- ✦ Moving expenses when necessary for health and safety
- ✦ Transportation expenses for victim or secondary victim to participate in the investigation, prosecution of the case, obtain medical, mental health or rehabilitation services or any other services required as a direct result of the crime

**On average, it takes 60 – 150 calendar days to receive an award. Emergency awards are available if claimant is able to show financial hardship and document loss earnings. Emergency awards are limited to \$1,000.*

Q. Where can I get applications for CVCP?

A. Chinatown Service Center (CSC) at (202) 898-0061, 900 Massachusetts Ave., NW, 4th floor.

Hours: Monday – Friday, (9:00 am --5:00 pm) Chinese-speaking staff at CSC and Korean and Vietnamese assistance available upon request. Services are free of charge.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Q. What is Domestic Violence?

A. Domestic violence is a pattern of violent and coercive behaviors between individuals involved in intimate or familial relationships. It involves the use of verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual,



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economic, and physical forms of abuse by one individual or group of individuals to maintain power and control over another person. Domestic violence can range from pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, forced sex, humiliation, threats of deportation, economic control, verbal attacks, intimidation, to threats of harming or removing children.

Q. How do I report cases of domestic violence?

A. For emergency cases, please dial 911 and for non-emergency cases dial 311. You can also call the Domestic Violence Coordinator at Police Headquarters - (202) 727-7137.

Q. What are the available local resources for victims of domestic violence?

A. Domestic violence victims can seek shelter in the following places which provides 24-hour hotline, shelter, and counseling for battered women and their children.

[House of Ruth](#) – (202) 347-2777

[My Sister's Place](#) – (202) 529-5991

Other emergency shelters that have no specific focus on domestic violence are:

1. Calvary Women's Shelter – (202) 783-6651
Shelter for homeless women
2. DC Shelter Hotline – (800) 535-7252
3. Mary House – (202) 635-0534
Family shelter
4. Sasha Bruce – (202) 547-7777
Shelter, counseling, and support groups for youth

Other organizations that offer support are:

- A) A/PI Domestic Violence Resource Project
(202) 464-4477; info@dvrp.org; www.DVRP.org
-offer translations in 13 Asian and Pacific Islander languages
- B) DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
(202) 299-1181
- C) Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
(202) 367-3098
- D) Asian Self-Help Association
(301) 369-0134; 1-888-417-2742



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- E) Ayuda (legal) (202) 387-0434
- F) DC Employment Justice Center (legal)
(202) 828-9675
- G) Women Empowered Against Violence, Inc. (WEAVE)
(202) 452-9550

HATE CRIME

Q. What Is a Hate Crime?

A. A hate crime is a crime that is committed against a person because of prejudice or bias. Victims of hate crimes are singled out simply because of their perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibility, physical handicap, matriculation, or political affiliation. Examples of hate crimes include:

- Physical attack
- Destruction of property
- Cross burnings
- Arson
- Vandalism
- Telephone harassment
- Painting swastikas and other hate symbols
- Use of racial slurs
- Cemetery desecration
- Verbal abuse
- Firebombing of residences, businesses, and churches

Q. Why Hate Crimes Must Be Stopped

A. Unlike other crimes that target individuals, bias-related acts have a tremendous effect on an entire community. When one person is targeted because of his or her race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or other characteristic, others in the community who were not the direct targets of the hate crime may also feel at risk. Tensions between different communities can also arise as a result of a hate crime.

Q. How do I report hate crimes?

A. If you have been the victim of a hate crime, know of, or have witnessed a hate crime, you can report this in several ways.



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- Call or visit your local Metropolitan Police Department district station.
- Call the Hate Crimes Hotline at (202) 727-0500, which has been established by the Metropolitan Police Department to assist victims of hate crimes. Callers can report incidents without having to give their names, addresses, or other personal information. Mail a written statement with the complaint that contains information to support a claim that the designated act constitutes a bias-related crime. Statements should be mailed to:

*Hate Crimes Coordinator
Intelligence Section
Metropolitan Police Department
300 Indiana Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001*

You can also report hate crimes to the community organizations listed below.

Q. Who should I contact to get assistance if I am a victim of hate crimes?

A. Listed below are the names and telephone numbers of organizations that offer counseling, referrals, and other assistance

Organization	Website	Phone
Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'Rith	www.adl.org	(202) 452-8310
Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)	www.napaba.org	(202) 347-5634
Crime Victim Compensation Program	CVCP	(202) 879-4216
DC Office on Latino Affairs (8 am - 5 pm)	ola.dc.gov	(202) 671-2825
MPDC Asian Liaison Unit	ALU	(202) 535-2653
MPDC Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit	GLLU	(202) 727-5427
MPDC Hate Crimes Hotline		(202) 727-0500
National Center for Victims of Crime	www.ncvc.org	(800) 394-2255
National Organization for Victim Assistance	www.try-nova.org	(800) 879-6682
Organization of Chinese Americans, National Office	www.ocanatl.org	(202) 223-5500



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POLICE DISTRICTS

Q. How many police districts are there?

A. There are 7 police districts. The following are their contact information.

District 1
202-727-4655
District 2
202-282-0070
District 3
202-673-6815
District 4
202-576-6745
District 5
202-727-4510
District 6
202-727-4520
District 7
202-698-1500

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY:

Q. Where can I get my child car safety seat inspected to ensure that it is safe?

A. The DC Fire/EMS Department offers free child car safety seat inspection services on a drop-in basis one Saturday or Sunday each month from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm. The service is provided either at Engine Company 24, 5101 Georgia Ave., NW or Engine Company 33, 101 Atlantic Street, SE.

The service is also available on a limited basis by appointment. For more information or to schedule service by appointment, please call (202) 727-1778.

Q. What should I do if there is a boot on my car?

A. The Department of Public Works (DPW) boots or tows vehicles in the District of Columbia that have two or more 30-day-old, unpaid parking tickets. A boot is a device attached to the car's wheel in order to immobilize it. The boot can only be safely removed by DPW. A booted vehicle is subject to towing immediately, if the outstanding tickets and boot fee remain unpaid. Boots are normally removed less than two hours after fines have been paid.

A vehicle may be towed by the Department of Public Works (DPW) or the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) if it is parked by creating a traffic or safety hazard.



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All of your outstanding tickets and dishonored checks to the DC Government must be satisfied before completing your DMV transaction. DMV accepts payments in the form of cash, money order, or credit card*. Checks cannot be accepted as payment for booted or towed vehicle fees.

<u>Booted/Towed Vehicles</u>	Fee
Towed Vehicle	\$100
Oversized tow	\$275
Towed Vehicle storage if you do not retrieve the car within 24 hours of the tow	\$20/day
Booted Vehicle	\$50

* The DC Government accepts VISA, MasterCard and Discover credit cards. The DC Government does not accept American Express credit cards.

Q. If my vehicle is towed, how do I retrieve it?

A. Call DMV Customer Service at (202) 727-5000 to confirm the location of your vehicle. Please be prepared to provide the state and license plate number of your vehicle.

Pay all outstanding fees and fines online or at [Adjudication Services](#) (301 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001)

Present your payment receipt, vehicle registration, and valid driver's license at the DPW [Blue Plains Vehicle Impoundment Lot](#) (5001 Shepard Parkway, SW). If you are not the registered owner, you must have a notarized statement from the owner authorizing you to pick up the vehicle.

If your vehicle is leased, be prepared to show the leasing agreement or contract at the impoundment lot.

Vehicles displaying expired license plates may not be driven from the lot. You must renew your registration and bring the renewal documentation and/or license plates with you to the impoundment lot, or have the vehicle towed.

If you do not claim the vehicle from the impoundment lot, it will be auctioned or sold as scrap.

You may be eligible to [pay your ticket\(s\) in installments](#).



Safety Information

Q. If I get a ticket, how do I pay it?

A. You must pay within 30 calendar days of the date on the ticket, or a penalty equal to the fine is added. For your convenience, DMV provides four payment options: online, by mail, in person, or You may be eligible to [pay your ticket\(s\) in installments](#).

Online

<http://dmv.washingtondc.gov/main.shtm>.

By Mail

- Make your check or money order payable to the DC Treasurer (**do not send cash**) and write the ticket number on your payment. Include the ticket, or if you do not have your ticket, write the vehicle's state and plate number on your check or money order (e.g. DC license plate #123456).
- Send your parking or traffic ticket and check or money order to: DMV Adjudication Services, PO Box 2014, Washington, DC 20013. Send your photo enforcement ticket and check or money order to: Automated Traffic Enforcement, PO Box 37075, Washington, DC 20013-7075.



In Person

- Payments are accepted at [65 K Street, NE](#).
- You may pay by cash, check, money order, or credit card. DC Government accepts Visa, MasterCard, and Discover. American Express is not accepted.
- If you are paying with anything other than cash, you must present a valid driver's license, DMV-issued non-drivers ID, passport, or military ID.
- Checks are not accepted for the release of booted or towed vehicles.

By phone at (202) 289-2230.



Safety Information

Q. How do I contest a parking ticket?

A. If you do not contest or pay your ticket within 30 calendar days of receiving the ticket, a penalty equal to the fine will be added, and you may lose your opportunity to have a hearing. You may contest a parking ticket by mail or by appearing at a walk-in hearing within 60 days of the ticket issue date. If the ticket is more than 60 days old, you may submit [Motion to Vacate Default Judgment*](#) to determine whether you may still contest the ticket.

District of Columbia law defines [defenses to parking tickets](#).

By Mail

Your request must be received within 60 days of the ticket issue date.

Complete the back of the ticket and mark "deny."

Complete the [Mail Adjudication Form*](#), summarizing your defense. Submit the form and any evidence, such as photographs or receipts, which you think might help your case.

Send to: DMV Adjudication Services, Attn: Mail Adjudication, PO Box 37135, Washington, DC 20013.

You will be notified in writing of the hearing examiner's decision within six to eight weeks.



Schedule a Hearing

Walk-in Hearing - Parking Tickets only

Hearings for parking tickets are available on a walk-in basis at [65 K Street, NE](#).

To be eligible for a walk-in hearing, you must be the registered vehicle owner, or have Power of Attorney signed by the registered owner authorizing you to act on his/her behalf. [Power of Attorney*](#) forms are also available at the information desk at 65 K Street, NE.

Note: If you contest a ticket and are found liable for the violation, you may [appeal](#) to the Traffic Adjudication Appeals Board.

Q. How do I get a residential parking permit?

A. Applicants may visit a DMV Service Center, submit the following documents, and pay applicable parking permit fees (Residential Parking Permit).



Safety Information

- Valid DC vehicle registration card
- Valid DC Driver's License or Valid DC Non-Driver's ID card
OR
- Valid Reciprocity Permit
- You may request a [Residential Parking Permit online http://dmv.dc.gov/serv/parking/RPP_Online.shtm](http://dmv.dc.gov/serv/parking/RPP_Online.shtm) if you have a valid vehicle registration and qualify for a Residential parking permit.

Q. How do I get a disability parking placard?

A. Parking placards and disability tags are issued at 301 C Street, NW. To obtain a placard or tags, your application must be certified by your doctor and must be accompanied by a letter on the doctor's letterhead documenting the illness/condition. You may obtain a temporary or permanent placard.

Q. If I own a vehicle, do I need to have vehicle insurance?

A. Yes. The insurance must be maintained for long as the vehicle is registered. Lapses in coverage are subject to fines. Do not cancel your insurance until your vehicle tags are surrendered to the DMV.



Q. Do I have to use my seat belt when driving?

A. Yes. The District has one of the strongest, most comprehensive seat belt laws in the nation. *You Will Be Pulled Over.* Unlike many other states, District law allows police to stop a vehicle solely because its drivers and passengers are not properly buckled up.

Q. What is the penalty for not using your seat belt?

A. It will cost you a \$50 Fine and 2 Points.

Drivers who fail to properly secure their child passengers face even stiffer penalties: a \$75 Fine and 2 Points for a first offense, and a \$150 fine for fourth and subsequent offenses. DC law now requires that all children under the age of 8 be properly seated in an infant, toddler or booster seat, and that 8 to 16 year olds be secured with a safety belt.



Safety Information

Q. Is it illegal for drivers to talk on their cell phones while driving?

A. It is illegal for motorists to use a mobile phone or other electronic device while driving in the District of Columbia, unless the telephone or device is equipped with a hands-free accessory. This applies only to drivers operating a moving motor vehicle and does not apply to vehicles that are stopped by the side of the road and not moving.

Q. What is the penalty for violating the law?

A. The penalty for violating the law is \$100. However, first-time violators can have the fine suspended by providing proof of having acquired a hands-free accessory prior to the imposition of the fine. There are no points imposed on violators of the Distracted Driving Safety Act.





Safety Information





Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
441 4th St. NW 805S Washington DC 20001
Telephone 202-727-3120 Fax 202-727-9655
<http://www.apia.dc.gov>
